

WHAT IS CLAIMED AND DESIRED TO BE SECURED BY LETTERS  
PATENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS:

1. A framework for a network management device, comprising:  
5 an object repository having a set of at least one object  
class definition, each object class definition containing  
information needed to retrieve instances of an object defined by  
the corresponding object class definition and configured to  
maintain data regarding at least one managed device on a  
10 network;

an object manager configured to retrieve at least one  
object class definition from the object repository and initiate  
at least one class function of the retrieved objects to retrieve  
at least one class instance; and

15 an interface configured to retrieve data from the class  
instances and forward it to a user of the network management  
device.

2. The framework according to Claim 1, wherein said object  
20 repository is configured to accept provider plug-in modules  
configured to hold at least one of said object class  
definitions.

3. The framework according to Claim 1, wherein said interface is XML/HTTP interface.

5 4. The framework according to Claim 3, wherein said XML/HTTP interface is configured to provide the data regarding at least one managed device to a browser.

10 5. The framework according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the object class definitions include a communication routine configured to retrieve data from a data store located on a network.

15 6. The framework according to Claim 5, wherein said communications routine includes an IIOP communication protocol.

7. The framework according to Claim 5, wherein said data store is a proxy that collects said data from a network device.

20 8. The framework according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the object class definitions include a communication routine that uses any protocol to communicate with a network device to collect said data regarding at least one managed device on the network.

9. A module for use in an extensible network management device, comprising:

at least one class definition, comprising,

a data storage definition configured to hold data needed to evaluate at least one aspect of a device;

at least one routine configured to retrieve data for the data storage; and

at least one routine that provide access to the data storage for display by the extensible network management device.

10. The module according to Claim 9, wherein said module is a plug-in module.

11. The module according to Claim 9, wherein said at least one routine configured to retrieve data includes a communication protocol for communicating with a proxy.

12. The module according to Claim 11, wherein said communication protocol is an IIOP protocol.

13. The module according to Claim 9, wherein said at least one routine that provide access include a communications interface to a remote management device.

14. The module according to Claim 9, wherein said at least one routine that provides access includes an XML/HTTP communications interface to a browser device.

5 15. A method of retrieving network management information, comprising the steps of:

determining a set of information needed for network management;

10 loading at least one object having a class hierarchy and class routines capable of retrieving and maintaining the needed network management data into an object manager;

invoking class routines for retrieving an instance of the object; and

15 forwarding the needed management data to a user.

16. The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of invoking class routines for retrieving comprises the steps of calling a set of framework provided mechanisms for communicating with a proxy to retrieve the network management data.

20 17. The method according to Claim 16, wherein said framework provided mechanisms comprises a set of IIOP communication programs.

18. The method according to Claim 15, wherein said step of determining includes the step of receiving a request for a set of at least one object.

5 19. The method according to Claim 15, wherein:  
said method is embodied in a set of computer instructions stored on a computer readable media;  
said computer instructions, when loaded into a computer, cause the computer to perform the steps of said method.

10 20. The method according to Claim 19, wherein said computer instruction are compiled computer instructions stored as an executable program on said computer readable media.

15 21. The method according to Claim 19, wherein said computer instruction are compiled computer instructions stored as an interpretable program on said computer readable media.

20 22. The method according to Claim 15, wherein said method is embodied in a set of computer readable instructions stored in an electronic signal.